

district. Today it is my privilege to recognize and congratulate the MSC Coyotes Green U14 Girls Team, the best U14 girls soccer team in America.

**WESLEY GROVE UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST 125TH ANNIVERSARY**

**HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a legacy of faith and community in Virginia's Third Congressional District. This year, Wesley Grove United Church of Christ in Newport News, Virginia is celebrating its 125th anniversary, and I would like to take a moment to reflect on the history of this esteemed institution and its contributions to the greater Newport News community.

Originally organized in 1887 by a group including Reverend J.H. Edlow and Deacon G. Wesley Raney, the Wesley Grove congregation originally met in a building just 20 by 30 feet, at the time too large for the small congregation. As a poor congregation, it was difficult for them to pay for this space. Fortunately, the congregation found ways to make ends meet, and in 1895, under Reverend James M. Parson, a new house of worship was completed.

In 1897, Elder S.A. Howell became pastor of the Church. As time went by, the congregation continued to expand, eventually growing to over 1,000 and finding itself in need of a larger place of worship. Under the leadership of Reverend Howell, a new building was constructed on the 700 block of 19th Street in Newport News. Dedicated in 1900, this building was used by the congregation under the leadership of Reverend T.S. Crayton, Reverend J.B. Jones, Reverend Thomas J. Moore, and Reverend Zander P. Jenkins.

In 1964, under the leadership of Reverend Jenkins, having once again outgrown their place of worship due to mergers with other congregations, the Wesley Grove congregation completed the purchase of a building owned by another local church. Reverend Jenkins, feeling called to serve elsewhere, left the congregation in 1970.

Over the next few years, the congregation struggled without a pastor at times. Reverend Vernon Harris served the congregation for a year in 1972 before Reverend Jenkins, having fulfilled his calling to other congregations, returned in 1974. Unfortunately, Reverend Jenkins passed away suddenly, leaving Wesley Grove again without a pastor.

With Reverend Jenkins' passing, Reverend G. Wesley Raney, III, the grandson of one of Wesley Grove's founders, proved ready to lead the congregation. During his ministry, the church flourished. Feeling called to pastor a church in another state, Reverend Raney left Wesley Grove in 1985, and was succeeded by Reverend Isaac L. McDonald. Under his leadership, numerous programs were established to help Newport News youth excel in their educational pursuits.

Reverend McDonald was succeeded by Reverend Prince Raney Rivers, who was

called to minister Wesley Grove as both a pastor and a teacher until 2005. A descendant of one of the founders of the church, Reverend Rivers presided over another period of tremendous growth for the church. Under his leadership, the Church established new ministries, expanded membership, and created lasting community partnerships to address issues and challenges facing the community.

Reverend McDonald was succeeded by Reverend Dr. Alexander Jamison, Sr., who served the community from 2007 until 2011.

Wesley Grove remains committed to maintaining its legacy of faith and community action to this day. With a congregation that has historically included a large number of professionals in the field of education, Wesley Grove established education programs that include after school tutoring and Project REACT, a technology focused tutoring program to help improve students' performance. It has also provided numerous scholarships to college bound students, including the G. Wesley Raney III Scholarship, the Olivia Smith Scholarship, and the Emma Gupton Scholarship. Wesley Grove also has an accomplished and talented choir program, featuring a men's choir, a senior's choir, and a children's choir. These programs, amongst others, continue to demonstrate Wesley Grove's commitment to the Newport News community.

As the Wesley Grove United Church of Christ gathers to celebrate this historic milestone, the church can truly remember its past, celebrate its present, and focus on its future. I would like to congratulate all of the members of the Wesley Grove United Church of Christ on the occasion of its 125th Anniversary, and I wish them many more years of dedicated service to the community.

**A TRIBUTE TO TYLER HANSON**

**HON. TOM LATHAM**

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. LATHAM. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Tyler Hanson of Sergeant Bluff, Iowa for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Eagle Scout rank is the highest advancement rank in scouting. Only about five percent of Boy Scouts earn the Eagle Scout Award. The award is a performance-based achievement with high standards that have been well-maintained over the past century.

To earn the Eagle Scout rank, a Boy Scout is obligated to pass specific tests that are organized by requirements and merit badges, as well as completing an Eagle Project to benefit the community. For his project, Tyler planned, organized, and painted badly faded curbs, light poles and parking lines at his local church. His project also included adding handicap accessible parking spaces in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The work ethic Tyler has shown in his Eagle Project, and every other project leading up to his Eagle Scout rank, speaks volumes of his commitment to serving a cause greater than himself and assisting his community.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by this young man and his supportive family demonstrates

the rewards of hard work, dedication and perseverance. I am honored to represent Tyler and his family in the United States Congress. I know that all of my colleagues in the House will join me in congratulating him in obtaining the Eagle Scout ranking, and will wish him continued success in his future education and career.

**PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

**HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN**

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Mr. LUJÁN. Mr. Speaker, due to an operational issue with the voting machine on the House floor, my vote did not register on the passage of H.R. 3803 (Rollcall vote No. 539). Had this issue not arisen, I would have voted "no" on this vote.

**HONORING MR. JASON ROBERTS**

**HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, August 2, 2012*

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Mr. Jason Roberts, a White House "Champion of Change" from Oak Cliff, Texas. This week, the White House honored Mr. Roberts and other leaders from across the U.S. for their groundbreaking initiatives to enhance their communities.

Mr. Roberts' leadership has been exemplary in his initiatives to improve local areas, and revitalize communities in South Dallas. As founder of the Oak Cliff Transit Authority, a nonprofit organization dedicated to reclaiming Oak Cliff's past distinction, Mr. Roberts worked to revive and modernize the Dallas streetcar system. Through hard work and ingenuity, Mr. Roberts led the city's effort to obtain a \$23 million TIGER grant from the Federal Transit Administration for their revitalization efforts.

Mr. Roberts' "Better Blocks" project reclaims blighted areas, converting vacant properties into temporary walk-friendly districts, complete with pop-up businesses, bike lanes, café seating, and landscaping. Mr. Roberts' efforts have been so successful in South Dallas that over 20 U.S. cities have taken steps to enhance neighborhoods in the same fashion based on his work. Mr. Roberts' "Better Blocks" project has even gained international recognition, and has since been featured in the New York Times, TED Talks, and on NPR.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to honor the hard work and vision that Mr. Jason Roberts continues to bring to South Dallas. His hard work and vision have allowed him to not only envision a better Dallas, but to also act on that vision. I look forward to seeing what future advances that Mr. Roberts will spearhead next, and I stand ready to support these efforts at every turn.